

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner and the Examiner's supervisor for the courtesy extended to Applicants' attorney during the interview held on February 5, 2004, in the above-identified application. During the interview, Applicants' attorney discussed with the Examiners the issues raised in the Office Action, and whether an *Ex Parte Quayle* Action was proper herein. The discussion is summarized and expanded upon below.

The objection to the term "a numerical aperture" in Claim 1 is respectfully traversed. The Examiner asks whether the term refers to porosity. In reply, the intended meaning is as furnished by the above-discussed amendment and definition. Indeed, this definition is consistent with the physical properties of a net, referred to as a netted spacer in the present claims.

For all the above reasons, it is respectfully requested that the objection be withdrawn.

The above-discussed objection appears to be inconsistent with closing prosecution on the merits. Nevertheless, the issue would appear to be moot in view of the above-discussed amendment.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's allowance of Claims 1-8. However, as noted during the above-discussed interview, a Preliminary Amendment was filed on October 30, 2000, which introduced new Claims 9-14. Since these claims ultimately depend on the allowed claims, they are allowable as well.

Applicants respectfully call the Examiner's attention to the Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) filed November 15, 2002. The Examiner is respectfully requested to initial the form PTO-1449 submitted therewith, and include a copy thereof with the next Office communication. A copy of said form is **submitted herewith**.

Moreover, since the date of the IDS is before the date of the Office Action and thus technically was part of the Official file as of the Office Action date, Applicants respectfully

request that should the Examiner determine that a new ground of rejection needs to be made in the next Office Action relying in whole or in part on any of the references cited in the IDS, then said next Office Action not be made Final, even if the new rejection was necessitated by the present amendment to the claims.

All of the presently pending claims in this application are now believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,  
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Norman F. Oblon  
Attorney of Record  
Registration No. 24,618

Harris A. Pitlick  
Registration No. 38,779

Customer Number  
**22850**

Tel: (703) 413-3000  
Fax: (703) 413 -2220  
(OSMMN 08/03)  
NFO/HAP/cja